**Mount Saint Vincent University**

**Faculty of Professional Studies
Department of Communication Studies**

**PBRL 3388 (01) – Co-op Term III**

**Fall 2025**

**Instructor: Ellen C. Shaffner**

Phone: (902) 457-6689
![C:\Users\srideout\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\X5K4YRX1\MC900023632[1].wmf]() ellen.shaffner@msvu.ca

Office: MC 305G

**Meeting Time/Classroom:** No Scheduled Meeting Time

**Moodle:** <https://learn.msvu.ca/login/index.php>

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Prerequisite:** Completion of professional development program delivered by the

Co-op & WIL Centre. Completion of courses prescribed by the Department of Communication Studies course sequence (PBRL 3012, 3013, 3014 and COMM 2016, 3023) or permission of the department.

**Course Description**

A 14-16-week term of full-time, paid career-related experience in an organizational setting: corporate, non-profit or government. Students will work with industry professionals who provide feedback to the university on the student’s performance and development. The student will be required to set learning objectives, and participate in a work term project. Evaluation for the successful completion of the co-op term is based on learning objectives, a work site visit, an employer evaluation and a satisfactory work term project/report.

**Key Learning Outcomes**

During this semester you will:

* Identify specific aspects of the PR practitioner’s function and responsibilities.
* Articulate learning objectives relevant to your job description and career interests.
* Reflect and document your co-op work term experience.
* Communicate with other practitioners in a professional manner using an online platform.
* Receive and provide peer support as you and your fellow co-op students reflect on your experience.
* Remain connected with your co-op peers and the co-operative education program.
* Engage your co-op faculty advisor throughout the work term by sharing information on your experience and receiving professional and academic advice and support.
* Understand and apply the concepts you were taught in your public relations courses.

**Learning Technologies**

Our course has a Moodle page. We will use this Moodle page to engage in online discussion and to submit assignments related to the reflective seminar presentation. Please ensure you visit the course Moodle site regularly!

If you need assistance with Moodle, Collaborate, or any other online learning technology, please email [online@msvu.ca](https://msvuhfx.sharepoint.com/Users/distance/Desktop/online%40msvu.ca). General support requests will be responded to by the next business day. Urgent requests, such as those affecting your ability to participate in a class, will be responded to as soon as possible.

**Learning Supports**

Your learning is at the center of this course. The Mount is committed to supporting you as a unique learner. The university offers a variety of resources, services, strategies and practices to support equal opportunities for learning. If you require academic accommodation, please contact me and [Accessibility Services](http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentservices/officeofstudentexperience/accessibilityservices/default.aspx) as early in the term as possible. I encourage you to utilize the variety of learning supports provided by the Mount to assist and to help you continue to develop as a learner.

**Course Conduct**

Professional and respectful behaviour and communication is expected at all times.

* Remember that any content you post to the Moodle forum will be visible to other students and myself as the co-op faculty advisor.
* Always remain professional and respectful when writing your posts and when commenting on your peers’ posts.
* Always respect the privacy of your workplace and be careful not to include information that is personal, commercially sensitive, protected or confidential.
* The faculty advisor has the right to remove any Moodle posts which do not abide by these above-mentioned expectations for respect, etiquette and privacy.
* Complete your course work on your own time; do not do the work while you are in the workplace.

**Assessment & Assignments**

You will receive a grade of pass or fail for your work term. To receive a grade of pass, you must receive an end of term evaluation of satisfactory or higher from your co-op employer and satisfactorily complete and submit all assigned course work.

 **Note:** Without successfully completing all of the assigned exercises for this course, you will not

pass PBRL 3388. **A failing grade in a co-op work term results in dismissal from the program.**

***Assignment: Discussions***

During your work term, you will be asked to participate in three online discussions with your peers. These discussions will take place on Moodle. You will create an original submission in response to a discussion prompt, and you will read and respond to the content posted by your colleagues. As the table below shows, you will make an initial post, followed by two responses to your peers due one week later.

Our anticipated schedule for these discussions is as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Deadline for your original Moodle forum post****(By 11:59 p.m. Atlantic Time)** | **Deadline for your two responses to other student posts****(By 11:59 p.m. Atlantic Time)** |
| 1 | Sunday, September 21 | Sunday, September 28 |
| 2 | Sunday, October 19 | Sunday, October 26 |
| 3 | Sunday, November 16 | Sunday, November 23 |

 ***Assignment: Reflective Seminar***

The PBRL 3388 work term project is a reflective seminar presented to new public relations students preparing to go out on their first work term. In your assigned group, you will work with your peers to prepare a one-hour presentation that will be delivered in January 2026 (following the conclusion of your work term). Full details of the Reflective Seminar are provided in the Reflective Seminar Presentation Assignment Instructions provided on Moodle.

**NOTE:** The Mount’s **Undergraduate Course Guidelines for Grading** can be found under section 2.2.20 at the following link: <https://www.msvu.ca/academics/university-academic-calendars/undergraduate-academic-calendar/regulations/>

**NOTE:** Your instructor may change the course requirements (if this proves necessary and reasonable) as well as the marking scheme with the consent of the Dean of Professional Studies and with reasonable notice to students taking this course.

**Department Writing Requirement Policy**:Correct use of language is one of the criteria included in the evaluation of all written assignments. Basic writing competency is required to pass this course. The obligation to meet the minimal standard lies with the student. If a faculty member determines that a student’s basic writing competency falls below the minimum standard for the course, the student will fail the course.

**Use of AI Tools in this Course**

In this course, students **are not permitted** to use generative AI-based tools for the forum discussions or reflective seminar. The forum discussions and reflective seminar are based on your personal experiences and opinions, so generative AI is not a suitable tool to use. This means you must complete the work without AI assistance.

***Forum Discussions & Replies****:*

You may use Grammarly or similar tools for grammar and spell-check, but you must state at the end of your forum posts/replies that you used this type of tool, and specifying which tool was used. You may not use tools that generate content (i.e. write or rewrite for you). These tools include but are not limited to: **QuillBot, Anyword, Jasper, ProWritingAid, Blainy, CopyAI, ChatGPT, etc.**

***Reflective Seminar:***

**You may use Grammarly or similar tools for grammar and spell-check, but you must state at the end of your presentation that you used this type of tool, and specifying which tool was used. You may not use tools that generate content (i.e. write or rewrite for you). These tools include but are not limited to: QuillBot, Anyword, Jasper, ProWritingAid, Blainy, CopyAI, ChatGPT, etc.**

**You MAY use AI tools to generate questions or ideas for your reflective seminar. For example, you could ask AI what some of the most common fears or questions of new co-op students are, then provide your own content (based on your personal experiences and opinion) to address those common issues/fears/questions. In such a case, you must clearly cite and acknowledge the use of the AI tool and which tool was used. See below for information on citing AI.**

**Citing AI Use:** Any ideas, text, images, code, or other materials generated with the assistance of AI tools (i.e. ChatGPT, Claude, Jenni, Github Co-pilot, DaLL-E, Midjourney, Google Gemini (and 2.5 Pro) and others…) must be properly cited. A simple, acceptable format is:

* + “Generated in part with the assistance of [tool name, version if available], [date of access].”
	+ Example (APA-style reference): OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT [Large language model]. [*https://chat.openai.com/*](https://chat.openai.com/)
	+ For in-text acknowledgment: “According to ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025), …”

***Important considerations:***

* AI results can be inaccurate, biased, or incomplete. You are responsible for verifying the accuracy and reliability of all information you choose to incorporate when you are permitted to use so.
* Many AI tools may collect and reuse the information you input. Do not share personal information, copyrighted materials, or unpublished work.

**If you are uncertain about appropriate AI use or citation, please contact me for clarification.**

**University Advisories**

### Scheduling Conflicts

If a student has a scheduling conflict with any aspect of the course, notably an assignment deadline or an examination, please contact your instructor in advance (1 week ahead) of the relevant deadline to request consideration for accommodation.

If a student has overlapping final exam times, a work commitment that cannot be changed, or is scheduled to write three exams in three consecutive writing times, an [Exam Conflict](https://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentservices/registrarsoffice/exams/default.aspx) form should be submitted to the Registrar’s Office. Documentation may be required.

### Accommodations

Students who have disability and who require academic accommodations must register with [Accessibility Services](https://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentservices/officeofstudentexperience/accessibilityservices/default.aspx) as early as possible in order to receive accommodations.

### Religious Observances

Requests for accommodation of specific religious or spiritual observance must be presented in writing to the instructor within the first two weeks of class.

### Course Material

This course may contain material that some may find disturbing and/or challenging to read, view or discuss. At any time in the course if you feel uncomfortable with the course material or discussions please contact your instructor.

### Use of Course Material

As a student in this course you should observe the following:

* Course material to which you are granted access in this course is only to be used for this course.
* Material that you submit as part of the requirements of this course cannot be used to complete the requirements of another course, without the expressed permission of the instructor of the second course. This constitutes cheating as stated in the Academic Calendar.
* Students do not have permission to upload course material to any external websites or share with others, unless expressly permitted to do so by the instructor. If you require further clarification about using materials from this course in other contexts, please contact the instructor.
* Under no circumstances are students permitted to provide anyone not registered in this course with access to the Mount Online course site established for the course.

Only students registered in this Mount Online course site are permitted to view, download, upload, comment or otherwise participate in this course site.

### Use of Language

Correct use of language is one of the criteria included in the evaluation of all written assignments.

### Academic Integrity

### *You play a vital role in contribution to and maintaining the culture of academic integrity expected of everyone at MSVU*. University regulations on plagiarism and cheating and other academic offences will be strictly enforced. These regulations, including applicable procedures and penalties, are detailed in the [Academic Calendar](https://www.msvu.ca/academics/university-academic-calendars/undergraduate-academic-calendar/) under “Academic Offences”. It is your responsibility to make yourself familiar with these regulations and consequences.

### Research

Students who conduct research involving human participants must have their research reviewed in accordance with the MSVU Policies and Guidelines for Conducting Research with Human Participants before starting the research. Check with your course professor or Chair of the Department about proper procedure.

### Class Attendance

Regular attendance is expected of students at all classes; the Mount recognizes the significance of attendance by stating it in the [Academic Calendar](https://www.msvu.ca/academics/university-academic-calendars/undergraduate-academic-calendar/).

### Class Cancellations

Cancelled classes will be indicated on the class cancelation line at (902) 457-6566 and on the [website](http://www2.msvu.ca/classcancellation/Pages/index.aspx).

### Online Class Recordings

Online classes held in Collaborate may be recorded and your image, voice, and name may be included in the recording. By remaining in the recorded session you are consenting to the creation of the recording and its use for educational purposes in the course it was created. Recorded classes will not be used outside the class context or for other purposes without consent.

### Distance Student Examination

When an on-campus examination is scheduled in an online course, only students who reside 100km away or more from the Mount may write at an approved proctor site.  Students must submit the [Proctor](https://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentservices/registrarsoffice/exams/proctor-sites.aspx) Site Request form within two weeks from the first day of the fall and winter terms and one week for summer session 1 and 2.  For additional important information on finding and requesting an approved proctor, please see the Registrar’s Office page on [Examinations](https://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentservices/registrarsoffice/exams/default.aspx).

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The Mount Teaching and Learning Centre and Online Learning (2018). *Mount Saint Vincent University Course Outline Template*. Mount Saint Vincent University: Halifax, Nova Scotia. Template last revised July 2020.

